



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

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Press Release

MORE THAN 50 SERVICE MEMBERS BECOME CITIZENS AT BUSH PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY

Former President George Bush and USCIS Director Eduardo Aguirre Address New Americans

COLLEGE STATION, Texas – Fifty-one service members became U.S. citizens this morning during an all-military naturalization ceremony at the George Bush Presidential Library in College Station, Texas. Born in 26 countries, the majority of the service members naturalized today have already served in combat as part of “Operation Iraqi Freedom.”

Joining the service members and their families to celebrate the swearing in were former President George Bush, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Director Eduardo Aguirre and USCIS San Antonio District Director Kenneth Pasquarell.

“As a naturalized citizen myself, each ceremony that I attend is a special event that takes me back to when I raised my right hand and became a U.S. citizen. Even with that, military ceremonies are even more meaningful once you realize that today, we naturalized men and women who had pledged to die in defense of liberties they had yet to receive,” said Director Aguirre. “Thousands of immigrant troops are making extraordinary sacrifices for America, and there is no more fitting way for a grateful nation to demonstrate its appreciation than through expedited citizenship.”

Under an Executive Order signed by President Bush in July 2002, legal permanent residents actively serving in the U.S. military, and legal permanent residents who were on active duty on September 11, 2001 or after, and honorably discharged, are immediately eligible to apply for naturalization. The President is authorized to waive the normal residency requirements for naturalization during specified periods of military hostilities. The July 2002 Executive Order designates the War on Terrorism, including the current conflict in Iraq, is such a period. More than 13,000 military personnel have applied for expedited citizenship since the Executive Order was enacted.

– USCIS –

On March 1, 2003, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) became one of three former INS components to join the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. USCIS is charged with fundamentally transforming and improving the delivery of immigration and citizenship services, while enhancing the integrity of our nation's security.